

Copyright © Two Journeys Ministry

Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

www.twojourneys.org

Please use in accordance with the copyright policy found at twojourneys.org

A Precise Question: Whose Son is the Christ?

Matthew 22:41-46

"I serve a precise God... and a precise Savior!!"

The Puritans were a remarkable people who accomplished far more than most men ever have because they knew what they believed and were totally dedicated. They numbered perhaps four percent of the English people when they took over the country; other men lacked their determination. One Puritan pastor, Richard Rogers of Wethersfield in Essex, was told by "a gentleman," "Mr. Rogers, I like you and your company very well, only you are too precise." Rogers replied, **"Oh sir, I serve a precise God."**

We see that precision in the universe around us, if we know what to look for

Astronomers can predict with amazing precision when a comet will return to our sky. Scientists can send spacecraft to land on other planets or orbit bodies millions of miles away. The heavenly bodies move in a thoroughly predictable fashion.

On earth we can chart the position of stars and planets for any given day, month and year, forward or backward, with incredible accuracy. Calendars are useful because of the universe's immutable laws. We can rely on the timing and position of the heavenly bodies because of the laws that govern their relationship. In a sense, the story of mankind is a story of our discovery of more and more of the laws that govern the cosmos.

For example, we experience the effects of the law of gravity. Though gravity is something we can't see, we know it exists. We know that it functions consistently. It is one of the fundamental laws of the universe. Similar laws govern every aspect of the universe—laws of energy, motion, mass, matter and life itself.

Paul Davies, professor of mathematical physics at Australia's University of Adelaide:
"Human beings have always been awestruck by the subtlety, majesty, and intricate organization of the physical world. The march of the heavenly bodies across the sky, the rhythms of the seasons, the pattern of a snowflake, the myriads of living creatures so well adapted to their environment—all these things seem too well arranged to be a mindless accident. There is a natural tendency to attribute the elaborate order of the universe to the purposeful workings of a Deity" (*The Mind of God: The Scientific Basis for a Rational World*, 1992, pp. 199-200)

A growing trend among researchers in biology, physics, astronomy, botany, chemistry and other major disciplines is study and debate over the complexity and orderliness they find at

every level throughout the universe. Writers and scientists ... describe what, from all observations and appearances, are a universe and planet finely tuned for life—human life in particular.

Davies: "A long list of additional 'lucky accidents' and 'coincidences' has been compiled . . . Taken together, they provide impressive evidence that life as we know it depends very sensitively on the form of the laws of physics, and on some seemingly fortuitous accidents in the actual values that nature has chosen for various particle masses, force strengths, and so on . . .

"Suffice it to say that, if we could play God, and select values for these quantities at whim by twiddling a set of knobs, we would find that almost all knob settings would render the universe uninhabitable. In some cases it seems as if the different knobs have to be fine-tuned to enormous precision if the universe is to be such that life will flourish" (pp. 199-200)

We live in a world PRECISELY CRAFTED FOR LIFE down to its tiniest details

And yet, for all the precision God the Creator has shown in the physical universe, He wove even MORE precision into the Scriptures.

The precise, meticulous mind of God in Scripture is NEVER MORE ON DISPLAY than in the final encounter between Jesus and His adversaries in Matthew 22

Jesus' enemies had twice been stunned at His answers to their questions... now He was about to stun them with a question of His own

In this account, we will see how PRECISE is the Scripture, and how precisely Jesus Christ handled them... even down to a single letter in the Hebrew

But more than revealing the PRECISE nature of God, this text goes infinitely beyond that... it shows us the TRIUNE nature of God...

The One God revealed in the Bible exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The fact that Jesus is the SON OF GOD, not merely the human SON OF DAVID is the centerpiece of the precise text we are looking at today

I. A Meticulous Savior: Every Iota and Dot Will Come to Fulfillment

Matthew 5:17-18 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

A. Christ Came to Fulfill the Scriptures

1. Christ Seems to Abolish the Law and Prophets

2. Christ Actually Came to Fulfill Them

B. “Not an yodh or a pen stroke...”

Greek is “iota”, for Hebrew letter “yodh”

1. The yodh looks like this in the word “Yahweh” (“Lord”)

y hw''hy

2. The “least stroke of a pen” might refer to the tiny pen strokes that distinguish one letter from another, like between a He and a Hech:

h

He (“hay”)

X_i

Hech

3. This is a METICULOUS view of the written word of God, and Jesus held to it perfectly
 - a. It was typical of the Jews, who studied the word of God with incredible accuracy and meticulous attention to detail
 - b. They knew that there were 613 commands in the Pentateuch (the Five Books of Moses, Genesis through Deuteronomy), and that 248 of them were positive and 365 were negative
 - c. The Scribes counted letters forward and back in the Law of Moses, and could tell you how many of each letter of the alphabet there were in each book, and even what the middle letter was in the Pentateuch (it’s the letter “waw” in the word for “belly” in Leviticus 11:42 (if you must know)!!
 - d. Jesus is every bit as meticulous, but all about MEANING and TRUTH, not about mathematical data
4. He says none of it will pass away until everything is accomplished

Matthew 5:18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

- a. The Law will still be around at the end of the world

b. Actually later Jesus goes beyond this statement:

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

C. Jesus Applied this to Prophecy

1. Jesus was very attentive to details, very careful in His handling of the text
2. In our passage today, we will see Jesus make an important point based on ONE LETTER in the Hebrew... the letter yodh!!!

II. Whose Son is the Christ?

Matthew 22:41-46 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ⁴² "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" "The son of David," they replied. ⁴³ He said to them, "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'? For he says, ⁴⁴ "'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet."'" ⁴⁵ If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?" ⁴⁶ No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

A. Context: The Final Week of Jesus' Life

1. Ongoing controversy with Jewish officials... they hate Him and want to expose Him as a fraud and to kill Him as a blasphemer
2. In Matthew 22, various of Jesus' enemies come to debate with Him and get Him into trouble:

Matthew 22:15 Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words.

3. A series of mental debates and challenges
 - a. The question about taxation
 - b. The question about the resurrection
 - c. The question about the greatest commandment in the Law
4. After Jesus handles all these questions perfectly, He now has a challenge for them!!

B. Jesus' Penetrating Question

1. Jesus was one of the great question askers of all time... beginning even as early as age twelve!!!

Luke 2:46-47 After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.

2. so often His questions opened the door for incredibly deep insights...

- a. to His enemies who were offended when he said to a paralyzed man “Your sins are forgiven, Jesus asked...”

Matthew 9:5 Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?

- b. to the legalistic Pharisees who were drilling Him for not following their traditions

Matthew 15:3 why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?

- c. To His disciples in Caesarea Philippi

Matthew 16:15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

- d. To two blind men sitting by the road

Matthew 20:32 "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.

To Jesus’ enemies who questioned His authority,

Matthew 21:25 John's baptism-- where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or from men?"

3. Now, this probing question...

Matthew 22:42 "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?"

- 4. For the Jews, genealogies were incredibly important
- 5. They derived a huge amount of their sense of self-worth as a people from being descendents of Abraham... John the Baptist sought to remove this as a false hope for personal salvation

Matthew 3:9 And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.

C. Jesus’ Enemies Answer Quickly

Matthew 22:42 "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" "The son of David," they replied.

1. This question was a cupcake, they assumed
2. The Messiah WAS to be the Son of David, as we'll study later

God's promise to David:

2 Samuel 7:12-13 *When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*

The Psalms and Prophets agreed with this plainly:

Psalm 132:17-18 *"Here I will make a horn grow for David and set up a lamp for my anointed one. ¹⁸ I will clothe his enemies with shame, but the crown on his head will be resplendent."*

Isaiah 11:1-2 *A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. ² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him-- the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD*

Jeremiah 23:5-6 *"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. ⁶ In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.*

Ezekiel 37:24-26 *"My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees. ²⁵ They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children will live there forever, and David my servant will be their prince forever. ²⁶ I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever.*

Hosea 3:4-5 *For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or idol. ⁵ Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the LORD and to his blessings in the last days.*

Zechariah 13:1 *"On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.*

So, for the Jews, this question was EASY... but the other shoe was about to drop!!!

3. Was the Christ the Son of David? YES!! But So Much More

- a. Both Matthew and Luke include lengthy genealogies establishing that Jesus was in fact descended from David

Matthew 1:1 A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham

- b. The apostle Paul makes this point clear as well

Romans 1:1-3 the gospel of God-- ² the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures ³ regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David

- c. Jesus was consistently called the “Son of David” during his ministry, and He never refuted it, but seemed to embrace it

Matthew 21:15-16 But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant. ¹⁶ "Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, "'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise'?"

- d. But Jesus’ point here is that He was SO MUCH MORE than merely the Son of David

D. Jesus’ Goal: That They would Acknowledge His DIVINE Sonship

1. They did not realize where Jesus was going with all this
2. What was Jesus driving at? Expanding their understanding of the Messiah
3. At root, He was pushing them toward acknowledging His deity
4. This wasn’t on their radar at all!!!

E. Jesus’ Devastating Next Questions

Matthew 22:43-45 He said to them, "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'? For he says, ⁴⁴ "'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.'" ⁴⁵ If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?"

F. “Oops... We Never Noticed that Before!”

Matthew 22:46 No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

III. Understanding Jesus’ Argument

A. Key #1: The Davidic Authorship of Psalm 110

“How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him ‘Lord’? For he says, ‘The LORD says to my Lord...’ If then David calls him ‘Lord,’ how can he be his son?”

1. As we will see below, Jesus’ argument absolutely hinges on whether or not David wrote the Psalm
2. If David did not write Psalm 110, the argument falls apart...
3. For example, if the Psalm was written a few centuries later “about” the Davidic King, there is NOTHING hindering the Psalmist from calling the Davidic King “my Lord”... it would actually have been expected
4. But clearly Jesus asserted that David was the author of Psalm 110

B. Key #2: The Inspiration of the Psalm (down to the “jot”) by the Holy Spirit

“David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him ‘Lord...’

1. The second key to the argument is the Spirit’s role in inspiring the Psalm
2. It is not merely the word of man here, but the word of the Holy Spirit
3. This guards the text from error...
4. One could answer that David was WRONG... but the Spirit’s role in inspiring the Psalm through David makes that conclusion impossible
5. By the way, these first two “Keys” are essential to ALL Old Testament prophecy... human authorship PLUS divine inspiration

2 Peter 1:20-21 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. ²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness

C. Key #3: The Fact that Psalm 110 was speaking about the Messiah

1. Jesus asked **“What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?”**
2. Then Jesus says **“How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls HIM Lord...”**
3. This whole Psalm is Messianic... talking about the future, coming King

4. If not, then the Psalm makes no sense: If David wrote it about himself, why would he call himself “Lord”? If someone else wrote it about a descendent of David who is not the Messiah, then how do you explain the grandiose assertions made about him in this Psalm? We will come back to Psalm 110 later in the course when we consider verse 4 and Hebrews 7:

Psalm 110:4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

D. Key #4: The Fact that, under the Laws of Moses, a Son is Never Greater than His Father

1. In the Ten Commandments, the son is to honor his father
2. A father would NEVER call his son, “My Lord”... especially a King to his own son
3. The logic of Jesus’ question implies that a father is always seen to be greater than his son positionally:

John 14:28 If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

E. Key #5: Every Letter is Inspired... and David calls Him “my Lord”

1. As mentioned above, the whole argument comes down to a single letter in the Hebrew... the possessive yodh at the end of the word “adon” (meaning “Lord” or “Master”) making it ADONAI... “My Lord”
2. Jesus bases everything on this one letter!!! David calls him “My Lord”
3. Now the word “Lord” (adon) can refer simply to a “Master” or “kingly Lord”...

1 Kings 1:24 Nathan said, "Have you, my lord (adonai) the king, declared that Adonijah shall be king after you, and that he will sit on your throne?"

4. but it is a common word for “Lord” as in “God” as well

In the following examples, the all-caps LORD is “Yahweh”, and the lower-case “Lord” is *adon*

Psalm 8:1 O LORD, our Lord (adon), how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Psalm 97:5 The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the Lord of all the earth.

Psalm 114:7 Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob

In any case, why would David call his own son His MASTER???

F. How Can the Messiah Be His Son??

Matthew 22:45 If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?"

There were MANY “sons of David”...

Matthew 1:20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

Proverbs 1:1 The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel

2 Samuel 13:1 In the course of time, Amnon son of David fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom son of David.

but only ONE that David could call “My Lord”... the Messiah, the King of all Creation, Jesus Himself!!!

Revelation 5:5-8 Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

⁶ Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷ He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. ⁸ And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb.

Revelation 22:16 I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."

IV. Jewish Attempts at Answering Jesus... Millennia Later!

A. Central to Their Answer: The Psalm was Written *About* David, Not *By* David

What follows comes from a Jewish website which is set up to enable its people to refute Christian missionaries (<http://www.messiahtruth.com/ps110.html>)

The Jewish Perspective

Regardless of who its author was, the overall theme of Psalms 110 is that it speaks of David's legendary power, which came through divine favor that was earned by his righteousness. The author of this psalm assures King David of victory over the enemies of his people, the Jewish people.

The interpretation of this psalm by Rabbi Ibn Ezra ... as being about King David is according to the *pshat*, i.e., the simple/literal reading, wherein the superscription is "**A Psalm for [or, concerning] David**"

[NOTE: If this Psalm was written "about" David and not "by David" as Jesus asserts, the whole argument falls apart!!! The Psalmist would have no problem calling David "my Lord" and it would not be noteworthy at all]

[What evidence do the Jewish apologists put forward that this was NOT written by David? They have none. They just say that the superscription at the beginning of the Psalm "Of David. A Psalm" does not REQUIRE that David wrote it... it might mean "About David" or "For David"]

B. Secondly: the Word "Adonai" can mean "Master" and Not "Lord"

1. They say that the KJV and other English translations wrongly capitalize "Lord" implying that the Psalmist meant to ascribe deity to the Messiah when the word "adonai" can simply mean "Master"
2. I would answer, even if it means "Master" and NOT "God", it is still surpassingly strange that King David would call one of his descendents "Master"

V. Implications and Application

A. This Psalm Helps Prove the Deity and Humanity of Christ

1. Jesus is BOTH the Son of David AND the Son of God

Luke 1:31-32 You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David

B. This Psalm Also Gives Us the Proper Relationship of David to Jesus

1. David was a sinner saved by grace
2. In heaven, David is not claiming to be above Jesus, but is on his face worshiping Jesus for being His Savior and His King

C. This Psalm also teaches us how to approach ALL OT prophecy... the principles Jesus assumes are key for us throughout our study of the OT

1. All Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit
2. Scripture should be read Christologically... with a focus on Christ
3. Scripture should be taken letter by letter accurately

- D. PRAISE GOD for the accuracy of the Old Testament... even down to the jot and stroke of the pen
- E. **PRAISE GOD** even more for the greatness of Jesus Himself... our LORD and Lord
- F. Fear Judgment by such a Meticulous God

Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.

Matthew 12:36 But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.

Sin is NEVER a little detail... sin is a virulent devastating force that God is determined to have out of His universe!!

G. Flee to Christ!!!

1. Christ the meticulous, precise Bible interpreter is also Christ the meticulous precise Savior
2. His blood shed for sins is infinitely sufficient for you
3. Allow His Spirit to live a very careful life through you

Ephesians 5:15-16 Be very careful, then, how you live-- not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

H. Little Things Matter...Bigger Things Matter More

1. God is ATTENTIVE to details, and cares about everything

Matthew 10:29-31 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. ³⁰ And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

2. BUT God cares more about some things than others

Matthew 23:23-24 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices-- mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law-- justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. ²⁴ You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.